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BROWNBACK, COLLEAGUES COMMENT ON NIH STEM CELL GUIDELINES

WASHINGTON – U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback and sixteen Senate colleagues have sent a letter to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) urging the withdrawal of NIH guidelines for human pluripotent stem cell research. Text of the letter follows.

“Since 1996 Congress has banned federal funding for ‘research in which a human embryo or embryos are destroyed.’ We believe the draft guidelines published December 2 by the National Institutes of Health for ‘human pluripotent stem cell research’ do not comply with this law, which we support and which remains in effect.

“Despite their title, the NIH guidelines do not regulate stem cell research. Rather, they regulate the means by which researchers may obtain and destroy live human embryos in order to receive federal funds for subsequent stem cell research. Clearly, the destruction of human embryos is an integral part of the contemplated research, in violation of the law.

“Because Congress never intended for the Executive Branch to facilitate destructive embryo research, we urge the National Institutes of Health to withdraw these guidelines as contrary to the law and Congressional intent.”

Signing the letter with Brownback were U.S. Sens. Don Nickles, John Ashcroft, Jon Kyl, Jesse Helms, Bob Smith, Conrad Burns, Chuck Hagel, Mike Enzi, Rick Santorum, Mike DeWine, Rod Grams, Kit Bond, Jim Bunning, Jeff Sessions, Tim Hutchinson, and George Voinovich.